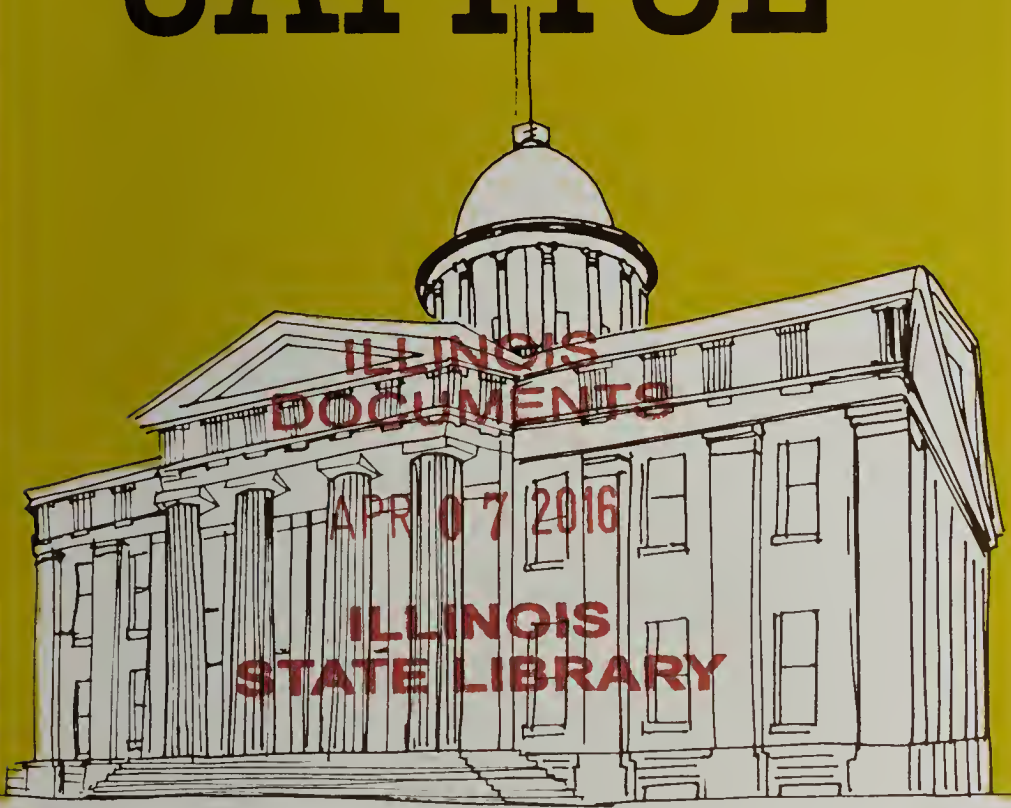


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THE OLD STATE CAPITOL



As it was
and as it
will be again



State of Illinois

THE OLD ILLINOIS
STATE CAPITOL
ABOUT 1858



The Old State Capitol which stood in the center of the Springfield square bounded by Adams, Fifth, Washington, and Sixth streets was practically a second home to Abraham Lincoln. It was a part of many important incidents in his life and had other significant historical associations as well. It was considered a perfect example of Greek Revival architecture and was called "the most historic building west of the Allegheny Mountains." That original building is now in the process of being rebuilt, and when the reconstruction is complete the Old Capitol will become a historic shrine of national importance.

Lincoln was a leader of a group of Sanagmon County legislators known as the "Long Nine" (their total height was fifty-four feet) who influenced the General Assembly to pass a bill on February 28, 1837 to move the state capitol from Vandalia to Springfield. On July 4 of that year the cornerstone of the new building was laid, but construction was not completed until 1853—the final cost was \$260,000. In the meantime some of the offices were in use and Lincoln was serving his fourth and last term as a State Representative when the House met in its new home for the first time on December 7, 1840.

This building was the state's fifth capitol (the fourth owned by the state) and was designed by Springfield architect John F. Rague. The two-story Greek Revival structure measured 123 feet, 4 inches west to east and 89 feet, 1 inch north to south. From the ground level to the peak of the roof it was 59 feet high, the cupola



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measured another 54 feet, 3 inches, and it was topped by a 36-foot flagpole. There were twin four-pillared porticoes at the north and south entrances. Except for the porticoes which were 44 feet, 6 inches long by 12 feet wide, the building was surrounded by a stone-lined moat, 4 feet deep and 7 feet, 8 inches wide. The stone walls, with their backing of brick and plaster, were 2 feet, 9 inches thick. The dolomite (a form of limestone) for the walls and pillars was quarried six miles south of the square at a site that is now covered by Lake Springfield.

As the seat of the state government this Capitol contained offices for the Governor, Secretary of State, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Auditor, and State Treasurer, and meeting halls for the two houses of the General Assembly, a State Supreme Court chamber, a Law Library, and a State Library. The largest and most impressive room in the building was the Hall of Representatives which occupied the west third of the second floor. The Governor's office was located at the southeast corner on the second floor.

From the day the new Capitol was opened until he left Springfield to assume the Presidency, Lincoln was an almost daily visitor. During that period he had three law partners and from time to time moved his law office but never was it as far as half a block from the statehouse square. He borrowed books from the State Library, studied in the Law Library, and tried more than two hundred cases before the Supreme Court. He served in the legislature

and later addressed a number of political and civic meetings there. The most famous of these speeches was delivered on June 16, 1858, when he said: " 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided.' "

Lincoln did not campaign actively for the Presidency in 1860, but during the period between his nomination in May and the election in November he spent much of his time in the Governor's office, and after the election that office became his headquarters. There, during those turbulent days just before the Civil War, he received well wishers, office seekers, political leaders, and reporters.

The last time Lincoln was in the Capitol was in May, 1865, when his body was returned to Springfield for burial. A catafalque was erected at the speaker's rostrum in the Hall of Representatives and the martyred President's mourning friends and neighbors filed by in a constant stream from 9 p.m. on May 3 until time for the funeral the next morning.

Although the Old State Capitol was almost like a second home to Lincoln, it also played an important role in the lives of other famous Illinoisans. Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's long-time rival was elected to the United States Senate three times by the state legislature meeting there. (Senators were then elected by the legislatures rather than by popular vote.) The first time was when he was only thirty-four years old, and the third time was in 1859 when Lincoln was his opponent. Like Lincoln, Douglas, addressed numerous meetings and political rallies in the Capitol. After the first shots of the Civil War had been fired Lincoln and Douglas conferred at the White House and the President asked his former rival to return to Illinois and rally support for the Union cause. The speech that Douglas delivered before a joint session of the Illinois legislature



THE CAPITOL DRAPED
FOR LINCOLN'S FUNERAL, 1865

on April 25, 1861, was perhaps his greatest and brought tremendous applause.

Another famous Illinoisan whose career was linked with the Old Capitol was General Ulysses S. Grant. His first Civil War assignment was a clerk in the Illinois adjutant general's office, but it was not long before his abilities were recognized and he was made a colonel by Governor Richard Yates.

Still other Civil War generals served in the legislature while it was meeting in the Old Capitol; among them were John A. Logan, Richard J. Oglesby, and John A. McClernand.

A tragic non-military association of the Old Capitol was that on April 16, 1846, it was the starting point of the trek to California of the ill-fated Donner Party.

By the end of the Civil War Illinois had grown so much that the need for a larger capitol was apparent. Plans for a new building — the present State Capitol — were set in motion by the General Assembly on February 24, 1867, when it passed an enabling act. The cornerstone of the new building was laid on October 5, 1868, and a year later (October 23, 1869) the old building was sold to Sangamon County for use as a courthouse at a price of \$200,000.

Thus when the state offices were moved out in January, 1876, the Old Capitol became the Sangamon County Courthouse. After about twenty years, however, the county had outgrown its quarters and the supervisors feared the roof and cupola were fire hazards. They accepted the suggestion of Springfield architect Samuel J. Hanes that a third story be added by lifting the entire building up and inserting a new first floor and that the cupola and roof be replaced with metal and tile. Before the building was raised the partition walls and the floors were removed leaving only the outer walls and two bearing walls running north to south through the building at the ends of the porticoes. Steel I-beams were inserted under the structure; it was lifted eleven feet, and the new first story of Indiana blue Bedford limestone was inserted. The lifting was accomplished in twelve days by the use of screw jacks at the rate of a quarter of a turn at each signal from the foreman. When the interior was rebuilt the room arrangement was different from what it had been for the Capitol. Ground level entrances were added at the east and west, the moat was filled, and an all-metal, higher cupola was built. The cost of raising the building was \$27,500 and the entire cost of the remodeling was about \$175,000.

This three-story building served as the Sangamon County Courthouse from 1901 until the early 1960's when the county board of supervisors decided to build a new combination courthouse and jail. The Illinois General Assembly voted an appropriation of \$975,000 to purchase the Old Capitol property for the purpose of converting it into a Lincoln shrine. The cost of the conversion will be borne by the State of Illinois with the assistance of a fund of \$300,000 raised by public subscription by the Abraham Lincoln Association.

The county continued to occupy the building until the autumn of 1965 when its new courthouse was completed. On February 7, 1966, the contractors began taking the Old Capitol apart stone by stone. All of the original exterior stone and the pillars were removed, catalogued and stored at the State Fairgrounds at the north edge of Springfield so that they could be replaced in their proper positions.

CHRONOLOGY OF LINCOLN AND OLD STATE CAPITOL



- March 1, 1843 Lincoln attends Whig meeting, Hall of Representatives, State Capitol.
- March 20, 1843 Sangamon County Whigs meet in Statehouse to select candidate for Congress. Lincoln, a candidate, withdraws in favor of Edward D. Baker.
- June 9, 10, 1843 Lincoln writes resolution adopted by Whig meeting in Statehouse. He also speaks.
- December 11, 12, 1843 State Whig convention at Statehouse. Lincoln chosen one of nine Presidential electors for Illinois and speaks on second day.
- May 22, 1844 Lincoln speaks on annexation of Texas in Statehouse.
- July 6, 1852 Lincoln delivers eulogy on Henry Clay in Hall of Representatives, Statehouse.
- October 4, 1854 Lincoln speaks in Hall of Representatives, Statehouse, in answer to Douglas's talk the previous day to which he had listened.
- February 8, 1855 Lincoln is present when the Illinois legislature in Statehouse votes on U. S. Senator. A candidate, he withdraws in favor of Lyman Trumbull who is elected.
- June 26, 1857 Lincoln delivers political speech in Hall of Representatives, Statehouse.
- June 16, 1858 At Republican State Convention in Statehouse Lincoln is nominated for U. S. Senator and delivers "House Divided" speech.
- July 17, 1858 Lincoln speaks in Statehouse in answer to Douglas.
- October 15, 1859 Lincoln makes political speech in Statehouse rotunda.
- January 9, 1861 Lincoln attends legislature which re-elects Lyman Trumbull U. S. Senator. Lincoln with others is seated within bar.
- May 3, 1865 Lincoln's body reaches Springfield at 9:00 p.m. and lies in state through the night in Hall of Representatives until time for funeral, May 4, 1865.



THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES, PROBABLY 1898



THE CAPITOL BEING RAISED TO THREE STORIES, 1898



THE SANGAMON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1901-1965



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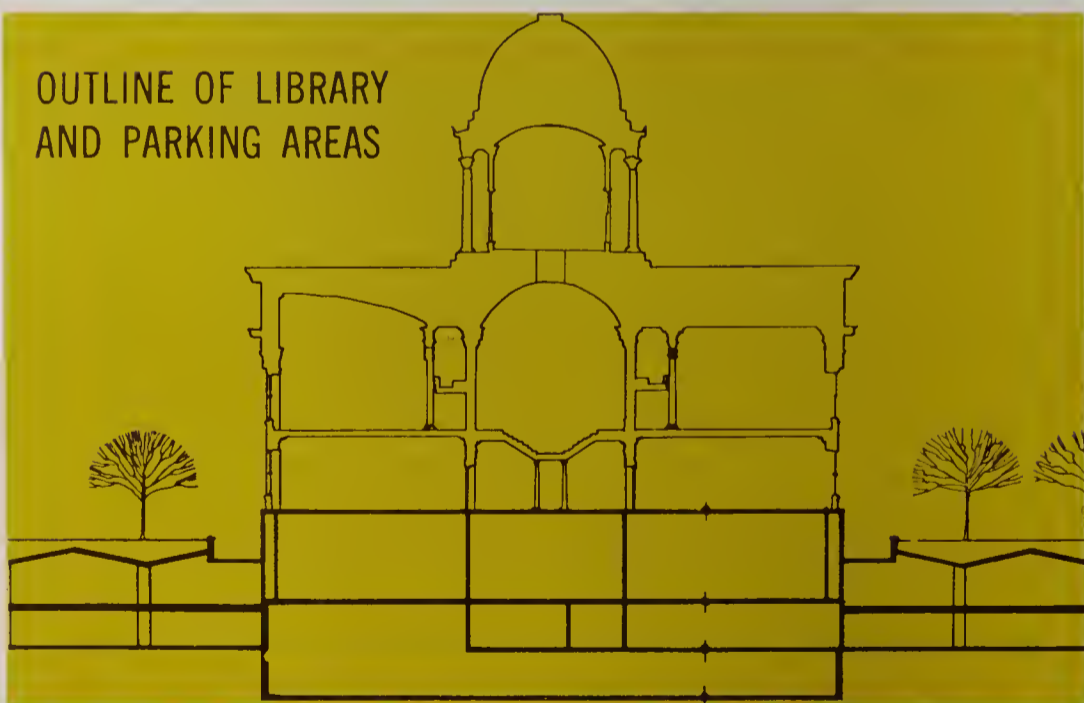


THE OLD BUILDING COMES DOWN, FEBRUARY 1966



STONE STORAGE YARD AT STATE FAIRGROUNDS

OUTLINE OF LIBRARY
AND PARKING AREAS



When the reconstruction is completed, in 1968, the Old Capitol will have the two-story exterior and interior appearance that was familiar to Lincoln. Beneath it, however, Ferry and Henderson, Springfield architects who designed the rebuilding project, have provided space for the Illinois State Historical Library and under the surrounding grounds will be a parking area to accommodate visitors.

This leaflet was prepared by the Illinois State Historical Library for the Illinois Department of Conservation.

OTTO KERNER, Governor

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois